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optical system[, for controlling a physical characteristic of said physical element to affect at least one of] having a light transmission factor and a light transmission amount at least one of which is changeable nonmechanically;

3
photoelectric conversion means for receiving an optical image transmitted through said physical element at a position of an imaging plane, for converting the optical image into an electrical image signal, and capable of adjusting at least one of a light accumulation time and a sensitivity; and

4
exposure amount adjustment means for controlling an exposure amount by a combination of adjusting at least one of the light transmission factor and the light transmission amount of said physical element, and at least one of the light accumulation time and the sensitivity of said photoelectric conversion means.

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-45 are pending in the application. Claims 13-45 have been withdrawn from further consideration. Of the considered claims, Claims 1 and 9 are independent.

Claims 1-12 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Toda, Kley, and Tani, for the reasons detailed at pages 2-9 of the Office Action. The undersigned would like to thank

Examiner Day for the detailed discussion of the art as applied to the claims.

Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are fully patentable over the cited art. In particular, the claims clearly recite the feature of a physical element and the feature of exposure control obtained by controlling the physical element. See, for example, elements 36 and 41 in Figure 5. Applicant submits that at least these features are nowhere disclosed or suggested in the cited art.

Toda includes a liquid crystal iris and automatically controls white balance to correct spectral transmittivity variations caused by the change in the iris diameter. That is, Toda fails to disclose or suggest structure or function for performing correction based on a transmission factor or a light transmission amount as is claimed in the present invention.

Kley disposes a light transmission control device which can change the illumination pattern, color, polarization direction, and amount of light incident upon an object of a microscope. Kley also fails to disclose or suggest correcting the transmission factor or the light transmission amount itself of the physical element.


Tani discloses controlling the diameter of a diaphragm. Tani fails to disclose or suggest the iris of the physical element. While the Examiner has taken the position that the diaphragm is equivalent to the physical element, Tani is totally silent on the correction of the transmission factor

based on the light transmission amount of the physical element itself.

Accordingly, the salient claimed features of the present invention are nowhere disclosed or suggested by the cited art whether that art is taken individually or in combination. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance and a notice thereof is respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 347-8100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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